1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5



The villager's diet is greatly affected by factors other than his financial condition or even his own personal likes and dislikes in food. Social pressure is a determining force.

Although the financial condition of the family does play a part in determining the differences in exact details of meals, most villagers' meals are very much alike. Rice is always preferred as the center or focus of each meal. Various items such as dried fish and some steamed, dried, or fresh vegetables may be added to the rice. Pickled items may also be included for variety and flavor.

Many village families, however, because of poverty or, sometimes, for reasons of thrift, substitute sweet potatoes for rice. If fresh, the sweet potatoes are steamed; otherwise, shredded dry sweet potatoes will usually be steamed together with the rice with which they are mixed. Sweet potatoes are much less expensive than rice, since they are grown on the less desirable nonirrigated dry land. Generally speaking, the villagers do not like sweet potatoes, and the adults complain that when children eat sweet potatoes they soon become hungry again and that they have stomach pains. On the other hand, rice is universally enjoyed and is held to be satisfactorily filling.

## FOOD AND RITUAL ENTERTAINMENT

The villagers' best opportunities for good eating as well as entertainment come mainly on religious, magical, and other occasions which are usually marked by festivity. These festive occasions are fairly frequent and have widely diverse origins; the religion of the villagers is Taoist, with an admixture of Buddhist and animistic beliefs and, of course, ancestor worship. In addition, the people frequently take part in magical rituals requiring the offices of shamans and various forms of divination in the case of illness, when demons are thought to be involved. Ample food of relatively high quality is served at almost all of these frequently performed religious and magical rituals, especially when outside guests are present. The amounts and kinds of food vary with the occasion. At one of the ordinary *pai-pai* (any ritual in which food or other items are sacrificed to gods or ancestors), which in the Hsin Hsing village area occur at least four times a month and at which there are usually no guests, the additional food may be some cooked pork or fresh fish and soup. This food is used for the ceremonial sacrifices and eaten later. There are elaborate food preparations for larger *pai-pai* dinners such as those for the village god, or at marriage festivals to which outside guests are always invited, or to a lesser degree at dinners for laborers at harvesttime. Sometimes at weddings, funerals, or other such occasions there are as many as eighteen

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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and are seldom fatal. Intestinal disorders and skin and eye infections and diseases are common and troublesome in the villages because of poor sanitary facilities and practices. These result, of course, from a general ignorance of the principles of sanitation and the causes of disease. Since the villagers know that these diseases are not usually fatal, they tend to avoid the expense and bother of consulting a doctor or going to a clinic, and the nonfatal illnesses often go untreated. Only the more educated villagers realize the importance of sanitation in preventing illness and are willing to take the trouble to maintain some semblance of sanitary practices.

The village water is commonly drawn from open wells. While the villager knows that drinking water is supposed to be boiled, he is usually satisfied if it comes close to the boiling point, or at best has just begun to boil. In visits to town he will frequently buy a drink from a street stand, and seldom consider whether the water used in the drink has been boiled. Intestinal illnesses are common, although the villagers frequently know enough to avoid serious difficulty.

Clothing is usually washed in the pond across the road which borders the village. The same pond is used by water buffalo for bathing and elimination, and the village storekeeper uses water from it to wash off ice before putting it in drinks or making a flavored shaved-ice refreshment. The village women wash their cooking and eating utensils in this same pond, and no one ever uses hot water and soap for these purposes.

Most villagers' houses are extremely cluttered and, in most cases, quite dirty. Major housecleaning and general cleaning of the village grounds are usually done only twice a year, immediately before the Chinese New Year and before the annual inspection of every house by police and public officials. This inspection was instituted by the Japanese, and has been continued by the local government under the mainlanders. Each house is examined for cleanliness and general neatness and receives a grade of excellent, pass, or fail. If a house fails the inspection, the family is liable to a fine and must remedy the condition.

The village has no running water. Water for household use is drawn from the open wells which are scattered around the village. Although open wells would seem to be a potential hazard for small children, few accidents occur, perhaps because young children are seldom allowed to crawl around on the ground and are usually in the care of an older child or an adult.

The only form of toilet facilities are outhouses, the small outside shelter with a hole in the floor formerly so common in rural America. The cleanliness of these facilities varies with the household. The contents are regularly collected and used to fertilize vegetable crops. This

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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practice makes it dangerous to eat raw vegetables, and most vegetables are cooked before eating.

## VILLAGE COMMUNICATION FACILITIES

The Hsin Hsing area has had electricity since the early 1930's. When electricity first came to Hsin Hsing village, almost all of the villagers immediately took advantage of the opportunity. According to the older villagers, the electric company paid for the installation of poles and other parts, but many villagers found the cost of the electricity itself prohibitive and were forced to discontinue service. Later, some of the electric poles not in use were removed from parts of the village.

Today, well over half of the village households again have electricity, although in most cases there is a bare minimum of one or sometimes two lights to a household. The majority pay a small amount each month to the electric company, for which they are allowed one electric outlet or light; the electricity only comes on at night. But many of the villagers, by doing a little electrical work themselves, are able to manage more than one outlet. They are especially active during times of festivities when lights are needed in more than one room at a time. When most of the villagers engage in this kind of improvisation, the fuses for the whole village's electric supply often burn out, and the village may be left in darkness for a day or two or sometimes for as long as a week until the electric company is notified or until some young man replaces the fuses. At other times only a minimum of light is needed, and usually a single light is strung in the doorway between two rooms, for example, between the ancestral-worship room (*kung t'ing*) and the bedroom or kitchen, or wherever the family happens to be at the time.

There are four radios in the village, but not all of them are in working order at any one time. Two of them were obtained through public or government agencies; the village mayor was given one by the Hsiang Public Office, and the elected head of the Farmers' Association village unit received one from the association. Small groups of villagers often listen to these radios in the evening. The other two instruments in Hsin Hsing are privately owned. The villagers' favorite programs are the frequent broadcasts of the Taiwanese opera.

The mail system in Taiwan is quick and efficient, and the village has a daily mail delivery by a regular postman. Most of the mail coming into the village is from family members who have gone to such places as Taipei to work or from village men who are away on military service. A few newspapers come into the village each day through the mail. Like the radios, two newspapers are sent free of charge by the

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 -Taiwan Hokkien
Taiwan AD6



great hunks of snowy fat (the poor man's meat), buckets of blood and entrails. The fish stalls, less gory and less colorful, abound with local river fish and a few ocean fish brought in on the early train, some swimming in buckets, others gutted but missing no eyes—a great delicacy, or tails—a matter of aesthetics. And everywhere there are chickens, ducks, geese, both live and dead. The smells to a foreign nose are sometimes exhilirating, sometimes appalling; the sounds are bewildering. The day's fowl quack, cluck, and honk their distress; above their protest the voices of customers and merchants rise and fall. The din of heated bargaining blends a variety of languages. The farmers speak either Hokkien or Hakka, the native Chinese dialects of the island; a few merchants and their friends converse in Japanese; policemen and soldiers prefer Mandarin, the official language.

Away from the uproar of the market, Tapu's streets seem relatively calm. The paved main street ends at the canal, an irrigation ditch civilized by concrete banks for its passage through town. In several places, steps that lead into the canal end in small platforms where the storekeepers' wives and daughters can do their laundry while keeping an eye on the store. There are more shops on both sides of the canal: a small bookstore, a tailor, a fabric and ready-made clothing store, a photographer, and a paper store that supplies school children with copy books and pencils, and adults with the paraphernalia of worship—metal wires dipped in incense and bundles of spirit money burned to provide for the deceased. One of my favorite shops is that of the *beidz*-maker who fills the air with a lively rhythmic chwing-chwing sound as he fluffs cotton into puffy battings for warm winter comforters. A little farther down the street a noodle-maker is usually at work. He suspends strips of dough between pegged poles which he gradually moves farther and farther apart as the noodles stretch and dry. Just beyond the noodle-maker is a small, paved square, formed where the canal goes underground. This is the site of a shrine dedicated to Tu Ti Kung, the lowest ranking god in the Chinese supernatural bureaucracy. Tu Ti Kung serves his celestial superiors as the official recorder of the activities of the living. In the country, he is the guardian of the land and the god of agriculture; in the town, he is considered a patron of business and a god of wealth. The responsibility for burning incense at his shrine each morning rotates among the families residing in his district.

3: Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien



because they were afraid it was dangerous, but Old Tan wouldn't let them because he thinks it's his son."

The children have heard this story many times but it no more prevents them from spending long afternoons playing under the tree than the ghost in the pig pen prevents them from hiding there when their mothers are searching for them.

For the children, the women, and a good many of the men, the significant dimensions of the world are the thirty-five or forty brick buildings of Peihotien. With the dramatic increase in population on Taiwan, one corner of a neighboring village now lies just across a paddy field from Peihotien. Yet a woman in search of a moment's chat or a few slices of ginger would rather walk further, within the boundaries of Peihotien, than step across the paddy field to the nearby village. The children of the neighboring villages all go to the same school, but their after-school play groups are composed of village mates—even if they must fill out a team with underaged siblings. A farmer's small plots of land may be scattered among those of farmers from several villages, but in the evening when he is puzzling out a new directory from the Farmer's Association or worrying about the market prices, he does it with the men of Peihotien who may work fields a mile in the opposite direction from his own.

There are several places in the village where groups of adults may be found gossiping or working together at various times of the day. On warm summer evenings the men often fill their rice bowls and retire to the doorstep to eat and chat with a neighbor similarly occupied. A group of families usually share a well and hand pump, and two or three women are there at almost any hour washing out a few clothes not worth carrying all the way to the river, rinsing off a dirty child, or preparing vegetables for the evening meal. The women who live near the irrigation ditch that skirts one edge of the village often gather by the little bridge to clean out a clumsy kettle or rinse out some diapers. A concrete platform on one side of the bridge makes it a popular cooling-off place for children who do not dare go into the river and aren't allowed to play in the precious well water.

For adults the most frequent informal gatherings occur in the three shops of the village. Two of the shops are so small that it takes a practiced eye to identify them. On the square behind the house in which we lived, a family sells cigarettes, matches, a few candies, toilet paper, and similar small items. Here, probably because the family

3: Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
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corner with a dozen or more table tops, stored there until needed in the guest hall for big feasts. Off the dining room, in the side wing of the house, is another sleeping room. This room is occupied most of the time by Lim A-pou's unmarried son, but he usually has to share the *tatami* sleeping platform with visiting children, male relatives, and whatever hired hands happen to be living in the house. Beyond this room is the busiest room in the house, the kitchen. Except on the coldest or stormiest days, the door between the kitchen and the small internal courtyard is kept open for light and ventilation. Most of the floor space is taken up by the huge brick cooking stove which boasts two, rather than the usual single, shallow cooking pans. One corner is filled with a heap of long paper strips, residue from Lim Chieng-cua's cement bag factory. The paper is twisted into hanks and fed into the stove by the women as they cook, by children when they can be caught, and, on cold days, by the men, if they have time to lounge before the evening meal. The walls are dark and dirty with accumulations of smoke and grease. Baskets, rice cake molds, tea kettles, and various other cooking utensils hang at random from pegs. Two closed cupboards hold dishes, rice bowls, cups, chopsticks, and bits of food that need protection from the animals that wander into the house. The kitchen has a convenience that is the envy of every woman in the village and that was a source of considerable misgiving to me. The well and the open cistern into which the water is pumped are located in the kitchen itself. My uneasiness arose from the fact that the next room contained, besides another small stove for the preparation of pig food, the Japanese style toilet. What we euphemistically refer to as "night-soil" is stored until needed for the fields, or until the pit is full, not ten feet from the water supply.

I was never sure just how the wing across the back of the house had been used formerly, but it may have been the original location of the cement bag factory. When we arrived, part of it was used for storage and part of it was taken up with the small bathing room. The storage room was cleared for us to use as a dining room and a sleeping room for our cook and our interpreter. Our long-suffering cook acquisitioned an alcove in the hallway to the bathing room for her coal oil stove. The rest of the back wing was occupied by another family of renters during the first part of our stay, but when they left we took over this space to house our expanding staff and to provide ourselves with a much needed testing room.

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Le-cu, the cause of all the trouble, did not return for several days but was finally summoned by her mother when it became apparent that Lim A-pou had no intention of departing from the established cycle of responsibility for cooking. Many men make a hobby of cooking, displaying their special skills at banquets and the like. We often savored some of Lim Chieng-cua's specialties, but in this situation it would have been impossible for him to step into the breach for even one meal, serving his nephews and children. Instead, his eldest son managed, and managed quite well, until his sister returned to assist him. To my knowledge, no words were exchanged between daughter and father, but one look at her mother probably was punishment enough. I do not imagine that Chui-ieng passed up this opportunity to tell Le-cu what she had suffered on her behalf. For several weeks Le-cu was a model daughter, but she avoided her father whenever possible.

By the time Lim Chui-ieng was moving around the house again, Lau Kim-chiok had gotten a job in a brothel in Wanhua and came back to the village once a month, if then. After a few months she formed one of the semi-permanent liaisons which makes a prostitute's life more bearable and sent for her daughter to live with her. Lau Bit never returned to work in the factory. Not long after, I noticed a gayly dressed young woman, rather heavily rouged, visiting Lau Kim-chiok's mother. My interpreter, amused that I did not recognize her, said that this was Lau Bit. She couldn't have been much over sixteen, but, as with so many young prostitutes, her youth disappeared with her innocence. Just before I left the village, I heard that Lau Bit had had her first abortion.

Relations between Lim Chieng-cua and his wife improved considerably after the crisis of Lau Kim-chiok's return. Although Lim Chieng-cua did not appear any more attentive than usual, I think his wife at last realized that among other things, her husband no longer cared for the responsibilities and expenses of the kind of entertainment he had enjoyed during his affair with Kim-chiok. He had not, in fact, for years, but Chui-ieng's outrage and jealousy prevented her from accepting this. She still complains about money and on occasion refers vaguely to past excesses, but she is more cautious now in her choice of words.

261 is not sufficiently nourishing; also, it should be denied
855 to small children along with other liquids in the evening
252 in order to prevent bed wetting. Rice was usually steamed or boiled; it was only fried for a dish at a banquet or when mixed with left-overs for lunch.

262 Almost every meal also included liberal quantities of vegetables which were lightly cooked and were usually placed on top of the rice to eat. The particular vegetables were drawn from those that were in season. Although many of them were grown in the village, others were purchased in Hsin Tien. Men were asked to shop on the way
262 home from work or a trip to town. If a woman went to
443 town, she usually shopped for herself and several others.
462 One village man drove his three-wheeled bicycle cart into
[493] the Taipei market each morning about 3:30 a.m. and bought a load of vegetables and pedaled home. After he left Hsin Tien, he stopped in each small village or group of houses other than the two villages with vegetable markets and sold produce from the cart. As he got closer to Sanlei, he lowered his prices. He almost always was able to com-
262 pletely sell out the last of his load in Sanlei. Villag-
178 ers generally felt that there had not been significant changes in the absolute quantity of vegetables consumed, but there had been great changes in the variety used and that people now ate more out-of-season and fresh vegeta-
262 bles. This was probably true but it seemed to us that

262 than one-quarter of a pound per man per day. It is a rare village household that would have two meatless days in a
178 row. Some older villagers claimed that in their youth,
262 meat appeared on the table only once each week but others claimed it was more often. Any question about economic conditions in the past almost always produced mild argu-
252 ments and disagreements. Pork is cut in very small pieces and mixed with vegetables in cooking and most often, seems
262 to be used primarily for flavoring and for the fat. Vil-
826 lagers agreed that a person needed meat regularly in order to provide grease for the joints in order to prevent sore
262 muscles. It was said that beef (water buffalo or yellow
[231] oxen) was eaten in the city. However, the water buffalo was so important to the villagers that no village man could bring himself to eat it. However, when one was killed in an accident, it would be sold to a meat store. Small boys occasionally snared mountain rats which were eaten but the house rat was considered too dirty to eat.
[751] Dog meat was quite expensive and rarely eaten although everyone said that a bit of dog meat in the fall would help prevent colds all winter. No village dog could be eaten however. Fowl were also significant but only on the special occasions averaging about three to five times per month.

261 According to most Chinese, eating is one of the
252 joys of life and cooking is a well-developed art form.

252 Most village women are proud of their abilities as cooks.
467 Several village men are also extremely skilled, hiring out
[463] as cooks on special occasions and almost every village man can prepare an adequate meal. Some men cook quite often in their homes although their wives were considered the regular cooks. When a woman is working for wages on a job while the man is home early, he will often prepare dinner. Also, if a wife is sick, a man will substitute in the kitchen if there is no other adult female kinsman in the household. There are only a few men who have never substituted as cooks for their wives. Nevertheless, when a man cooks for either special occasions or as a substitute, women will almost always clean the kitchen and wash the dishes.

263 Peanut oil, ginger, soy sauce, red sauce, and
252 monosodium glutamate are important items in cooking. Most dishes are combinations of various ingredients and spices. It is often jokingly stated that no Chinese dish is composed of less than ten items. Cooking techniques include sauteing, deep frying, and steaming. Of course, boiling is important for soups.

271 Water can not be consumed without boiling it first.
272 Since Sanlei was a tea processing village, tea usually replaces plain boiled water. However, the tea is usually very weak and of poorer grades; a single set of tea leaves
273 was reused several times. Wine or beer is for special occasions only although there are a couple of men in the

443 local stores (20% discount) or to the nearby mine dormitories (10% less than town prices with free delivery).

Subsistence Crops

243 By this category, I refer to those items grown for
244 home consumption. A major item is sweet potatoes which can be grown on dry land in small scattered locations. Occasionally, they are planted at the end of the second crop in a paddy field but in this case, it is not possible to plant the first rice crop the following year. However, the yield is high and part of the field can be used for
262 the rice seedlings. Sweet potatoes are an important part
• 252 of the local diet, particularly in the form of a fried
231 sweet-potato pancake, steamed, or as a kind of mush. Also, both the leaves and potatoes are excellent for animal
251 fodder. Sliced in chips and dried in the sun, sweet potatoes can be readily preserved for future consumption.
244 When sweet potatoes, which take six months to mature, are planted after the second rice crop, raddish is inter-
[251] planted in a multiple cropping technique. Raddishes, which only take 60 days to mature, are dried and preserved with salt or pickled.

244 Almost every house, even those with no other agricultural activities, will have a small nearby vegetable garden. Several of the very small plots of land away from the households are also devoted to vegetables, but not any